

# CAPE TOWN CALEDONIAN SOCIETY

Established 1881 NPO Reg No 036-264

## NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2007

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Dear Member

We are now in High Summer and no mistake! The heat is often un-bearable and the smell of grass or mountain fires are a constant companion.

Did you see Comet McNaught? I hope so! I was fortunate enough to see it at Onrust where it was spectacular against a black sky. Makes one feel so aware of the wonder of our universe and how small and insignificant we are in the overall picture.

## THE WAY TO THE BANK

*By Bill MacDonald*

Every day millions of people deposit millions of various currencies in Savings Banks. There are thousands of such institutions so it is hard to imagine that there once was the first one. Well there was, and it is still in existence as a museum in the tiny village of **Ruthwell** on the **Solway Coast** of Southern Scotland. It is the smallest bank you will ever see, but one which is the memorial to the greatest event in the world of commerce.

The bank was opened by **Henry Duncan** who was born on **8 October 1774**, at **Lochrutton**, near **Dumfries**. His education began in **Dumfries Academy** then continued in **St Andrews University**. He followed his forefathers and became a minister in **1798**.

Henry arrived in Ruthwell when life was wretched as a result of poverty and unemployment.

One of his first tasks was to arrange a shipment of corn from **Liverpool** and have it distributed among the poor families. He revitalised the village's **Friendly Society** which had been set up to provide assistance in hard times.

Believing that the poor would benefit from the institution of the desire to help themselves, Henry devised a scheme to bring financial security through the founding of an economical bank for the industrious. His first bank opened in Ruthwell on **10 May 1810**.

He obviously understood the thrift of the canny Scot. (To be cont.)

## FROM THE CHIEF

I am sure that those of you who attended our Burns Nicht will agree that it was an enjoyable and entertaining evening. While we will probably return to our traditional Kelvin Grove next year, I thought that the Gardens Presbyterian Church Hall worked out pretty well as a more reasonably priced alternative with a more homely atmosphere. Geoff Ritson's Immortal Memory was amongst the best I have heard (and I know there are some of you who have been to more Burns Suppers than I have!) especially as his tribute was based around his own personal experience even going back to his school going days in Scotland. It was wonderful seeing some old members again – some for the first time -

as well as the new.

In my quest to taste more haggis, last Saturday night I attended the Burns Supper Club's Burns Night at Kelvin Grove. This was also a great evening so well done to Will Carter and his team.

You will note below the Kirstenbosch concert this coming weekend which has a strong Scot's flavour. Do show your support and come along to watch the Cape Town Highlanders who will be performing with the Back-to-Back group. Last Saturday I heard some of the music which they will be playing and I am sure that you will not be disappointed! We normally sit half way up on the left side of the lawn facing the stage so watch out for us. We will probably have a Scottish flag as a marker.

A lot of effort goes into preparing for our functions and I urge our members to support these whenever you can. Poor responses mean that your Council has to make many phone calls to encourage attendance. On the other hand good responses are so encouraging and rewarding. Please bear this in mind as we make our way through 2007.

At Congress last year, one Society won the first prize for membership as they attracted 7 new members. As I recall this was because all the others had declines in membership! So please encourage your friends to join as well. We need more ambassadors out there so that we can win next time round! We already have about 6 or 7 new members.

Yours aye,  
Peter

## FUNCTIONS

### **KIRSTENBOSCH CONCERT**

**Date Sunday 11 February**

**Venue: Kirstenbosch Gardens**

**Time 17:30 - 18:30**

Following live appearances at the prestigious Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the Isle of Mann, the Drums and Pipes of the Cape Town Highlanders present a dynamic show which fuses African rhythm and Celtic tradition.. The gates open at 15:00. Further information and tickets from Kirstenbosch or Computicket.

### **MYSTERY AFTERNOON**

**Date Saturday 3 March**

**Venue Gardens Presbyterian Church Hall**

**Time 15:00 - 17:00**

An afternoon of fun and laughter, stories, songs and quizzes. This will be an opportunity for members to get to know one another, and is free of charge – donations would be welcome though to defray costs. This is your chance to share any amusing story about a Scottish ancestor. Eats, tea and coffee will be served. Please RSVP to Honorary Padre Myra Horn on Tel 021 558 4045.

### **IRISH NIGHT**

**Date Saturday 31 March 2007**

**Venue Pinelands Catholic Church Hall**

**Time 19h30**

Pinelands and Cape Town Caledonian Society are putting on this joint event with the profits going to the Western Cape Gathering Fund. The Irish Societies will be invited to attend. This event is still in the planning stages so we will have more for you in the next newsletter with a booking form. In the meantime should you want your name placed on the list please call Lady President Nicky at Tel: 021 712 2506.

### **WESTERN CAPE HIGHLAND GATHERING**

**Date 7 April 2007**

**Venue Playing fields of Wynberg Boys' High School**

Please keep this all-day event in mind and come with your family and friends to enjoy the Pipe Bands, Highland Dancing, Tug-of-War, etc. There will be a number of stalls offering their wares and an abundant selection of food and liquid refreshment. We would greatly appreciate your participation in

any way that appeals to you. If you are interested please telephone **Ian McWalter at 021 685 6000 (a/h)**.

Should you require transport to functions please telephone our Secretary, **Ian McWalter, at 021 685 6000 (a/h)** to arrange this.

## NEW MEMBERS

**Peter Boyd** of Morningside Johannesburg is most welcome among us. *May ye ne'er want a friend nor a dram tae gie him!* It was good meeting up with Peter at our Burns Nicht accompanied by Jody. We hope to see him often down here in our Mother City.

**MEMBERS' NEWS** On **Wednesday 31 January** we said farewell to **Beryl Guthrie** at Noordhoek Manor, where she had been resident for several years. We shall remember her with great affection for who she was and how much both she and Gordon contributed to the Society over very many years.

We hear that **Mieke Gordon** has been ill with tick bite fever (not to be taken lightly) and hope she is on the way to a full recovery. Get well soon, Mieke.

We are also distressed to hear that our Federation Lady President **Rose MacMillan** has had a very bad fall down the stairs in their home and had to have stitches to the wound. She is badly bruised and shaken. We wish her a speedy recovery.

We ask that you remember to share your news with us. Pick up the telephone and tell us what is of interest in your life. The same applies if you have an item you would like us to print. Thank you.

## THE MAGIC OF THE MINI

*Sandy Gray, Kinmundy*

Watching a TV programme featuring Uri Geller bending spoons, etc., by the power of the mind and inviting viewers to join in his experiments, I picked up my car keys and wished for the return of my Mini Minor which had been stolen three months previously.

Towards the end of the programme a policeman arrived at the door to tell me my car had been found undamaged 40 miles away. It appeared as if the thief had intended using it for a robbery, as a detailed map of a shopping centre was found in the glove compartment, and he had then lost his nerve and abandoned it. Perhaps we could invite Uri over here to help our hard pressed police force. He would surely be working overtime!

## SCOTS PROVERBS

*Better be quiet than sing a bad sang*

*Gentility will ne'er bile the pot*

*If ye canna bite dinna show yer teeth*

*Better a guid wife than a plough an' land*

*The de'il bairns hae aye the de'il's luck*

*Mony a yin speirs the gait he kens fu' weel*

## A HIGHLANDER'S TOAST

*Here's tae the heath, the hill and the heather,  
The bonnet, the plaidie, the kilt and the feather,  
Here's tae the song that auld Scotland can boast,*

*May her name ne'er dee - that's a Highland man's toast.*

The last two items have come from a book entitled *The Scots Book* by *Ronald MacDonald Douglas*, which was given to me by **Brian Fitzpatrick**, a well loved and respected one time member of our Society who has now returned to Scotland and is living in Perth.

From the introduction to the book I quote:

*Scotland has felt the need to realise herself. More than most countries her strength is derived from the roots of her past traditions and loyalties. - Interesting - To the smooing of the peats, and to the new flame from the gleads in the morning.*

Greeting from your Chief, Lady President and Council

And your scribe